

CLAIMS:

1. A method of producing a beverage powder mixable with a liquid medium to form a beverage, the method comprising, in order:

providing at least one beverage ingredient, including at least one of a fruit and a vegetable;

pureeing the at least one beverage ingredient into an ingredient puree;

freeze drying the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree; and

pulverizing the dried ingredient puree to form a powder.

2. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 1, including the step of adding a liquid to the at least one beverage ingredient prior to the step of pureeing the at least one beverage ingredient into an ingredient puree.

3. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 2, wherein the step of pureeing the at least one beverage ingredient into an ingredient puree includes releasing easily dissolvable materials from a matrix for the at least one beverage ingredient.

4. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 3, wherein the step of releasing easily dissolvable materials from a matrix for the at least one beverage ingredient includes the step of separating problematic particles and allowing them to disperse before they interact among themselves.

5. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 1, including the step of packaging the powder in one of a bottle, packet or canister.

6. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 5, including the step of mixing the beverage powder with a liquid medium to form the beverage, wherein the liquid medium comprises a juice made, at least in part, from a fruit or vegetable.

7. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 5, including the step of mixing the beverage powder with a liquid medium to form the beverage, wherein the liquid medium comprises water.

8. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 1, wherein the step of freeze drying the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree includes the step of vacuum drying the dried ingredient puree.

9. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 8, wherein the step of vacuum drying the dried ingredient puree includes the step of heating the dried ingredient puree.

10. A method of producing a beverage powder in accordance with claim 9, wherein at least a portion of the step of freeze drying the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree occurs at temperatures between -20°C and -40°C , at least a portion of the step of vacuum drying the dried ingredient puree occurs at a vacuum of between 50 and 300 millitorr, and at least a portion of the step of heating the dried ingredient puree occurs at a temperature above 30°C .

11. A method of making a beverage powder formable into a beverage having a target color, the method comprising, in sequence:

selecting one or more fruits or vegetables;

assigning a reference color to the one or more fruit or vegetables;

selecting a target color for the beverage powder, the target color for the beverage powder corresponding to the reference color assigned to the one or more fruit or vegetables;

pureeing the one or more fruits or vegetables into an ingredient puree;

dehydrating the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree;

grinding the dried ingredient puree to reduce the dried ingredient puree into a beverage powder, the beverage powder being formable into a beverage upon mixing with a liquid medium; and

comparing the actual color of the beverage powder to the target color and either discarding the beverage powder if the actual color and target color do not match or accepting the beverage powder if the actual color and target color match.

12. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 11, wherein the step of dehydrating the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree includes the step of freeze drying the ingredient puree.

13. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 12, wherein the step of dehydrating the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree also includes the step of drying the ingredient puree under a vacuum.

14. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 13, wherein the step of drying the ingredient puree under a vacuum includes the step of applying heat to the ingredient puree.

15. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 11, wherein the step of assigning a reference color to the

one or more fruit or vegetables includes the step of selecting the reference color to correspond to a fresh color associated with a fresh form of the one or more fruit or vegetables.

16. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 11, wherein the step of selecting a target color for the beverage powder includes the step of adjusting the reference color based upon a color of a liquid medium with which the beverage powder is to be mixed.

17. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 16, including adjusting the reference color based upon the resulting color when the beverage powder is mixed with a liquid medium that includes a fruit or vegetable juice.

18. A method of making a beverage powder in accordance with claim 11, wherein the one or more fruit or vegetables includes one of broccoli, cantaloupe, carrot, spinach, sweet potato, apple, blueberry, kale, and strawberry.

19. A beverage powder made in accordance with claim 11.

20. An apparatus for producing a beverage powder mixable with a liquid medium to form a beverage, the apparatus comprising:

means for providing at least one beverage ingredient, including at least one of a fruit and a vegetable;

means for pureeing the at least one beverage ingredient into an ingredient puree;

means for freeze drying the ingredient puree into a dried ingredient puree; and

means for pulverizing the dried ingredient puree to form a powder.